

Zimbabwe Developments

Zimbabwe Ends Controversial Mugabe Land-Grab Programme With Offer to Return BIPPA-Covered Land and To Pay \$3.5 Billion In Compensation To White Farmers

In 2000, then-Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe forcefully and, in some cases violently evicted more than 4,000 white farmers from their land and then redistributed that land to 300,000 indigenous Black families. No compensation was paid. This policy led to global condemnation and sanctions that still are in place today.

From 2000 until his resignation from power in November 2017, President Mugabe declined to engage the white farmers. After Mugabe stepped down, President Emmerson Mnangagwa has led efforts to engage and to compensate the white farmers in line with the provisions of the 2013 Constitution. Two years of difficult and often emotional negotiations with multiple representatives of the 4,000 farmers culminated, on July 29, in the historic signature of the \$3.5 billion compensation agreement. 94 percent of the former farmers canvassed responded positively to President Mnangagwa's compensation offer, even in the face of significant opposition from some on the left in Zimbabwe.

In the settlement, the Zimbabwean government has also offered to return land taken from foreign nationals whose property was covered by bilateral investment protection agreements (BIPPA's) between Zimbabwe and their respective countries of origin. Below are highlights from several of the most notable independent press reports on the settlement agreement:

BBC: [Zimbabwe To Return Land Seized From Foreign Farmers](#)

- Zimbabwe has offered to return land to foreign nationals whose farms were seized under a controversial government programme two decades ago.

- The US has said compensating farmers is one of the requirements for it to lift decades of economic sanctions.
- To allow the former owners "to regain possession" of their land, the government will revoke offers made to black farmers currently occupying the farms and "offer them alternative land elsewhere," according to a joint statement by the Zimbabwean Minister of Finance and Minister of Agriculture.
- The offer marks an important step in repairing relations with Western nations and avoiding international judgements against Zimbabwe worth hundreds of millions of dollars.

The Independent: Zimbabwe Agrees To Pay £2.6 Billion Compensation To White Farmers, Ending Divisive Mugabe Policy

- Zimbabwe agreed to pay \$3.5bn (£2.6bn) in compensation to white farmers whose land was expropriated by the government to resettle Black families, moving a step closer to resolving one the most divisive policies of the Robert Mugabe era.
- Former President Robert Mugabe's government violently evicted 4,500 white farmers and redistributed land to around 300,000 Black families.

- The land seizures were one of Mugabe's signature policies that soured ties with the West.
- The programme still divides public opinion in Zimbabwe, as opponents see it as a partisan process that left the country struggling to feed itself. But its supporters say it has empowered landless Black people.

[The Daily Mail](#): Zimbabwe Offers £2.7 Billion Compensation To 4,500 White Farmers Whose Land Was Seized Under Robert Mugabe

- Zimbabwe signed a US\$3.5 billion compensation agreement with white farmers whose land was seized over 20 years ago under the country's controversial reforms.
- Then-President Robert Mugabe forcibly took more than 4,000 farms from the country's 4,500 white large-scale commercial farmers.
- Mugabe's successor Emmerson Mnangagwa said the deal was 'historic in many respects.'
- Zimbabwe launched controversial land reforms in the year 2000 when ruling ZANU-PF party activists and veterans of the 1970s liberation seized large swathes of farms.

- Mugabe justified the land grabs as a way to correct historical wrongs by claiming back land that was forcibly taken from the nation's Black citizens.
- Critics blame Mugabe's land programme for wreaking havoc on the agriculture sector - a mainstay of the economy.
- 'It brings closure and a new beginning in the history of the land discourse in Zimbabwe,' Mnangagwa said.

Associated Press: **Zimbabwe Signs Billion-Dollar Deal To Repay White Farmers**

- Zimbabwe's government signed a deal with former white farmers to pay them billions of dollars in compensation roughly two decades after they lost their land in often violent invasions.
- About 4,000 farmers lost large swathes of land when Zimbabwe's late leader Robert Mugabe launched the often-chaotic land reform program which he said was aimed at addressing colonial-era land inequities. White farmers had owned the majority of prime farmland.
- Mnangagwa, who took power in 2017 after Mugabe was forced to resign, has encouraged former white farmers to apply for pieces of land.
- The president said the latest developments have brought closure.

CNBC Africa: What Do Zimbabwe's Farmers Think Of The \$3.5 Bn Deal?

- Andrew Pascoe, President of the Commercial Farmers' Union in Zimbabwe, stated, "We are not blind to the limitations, but we recognise that for the first time in two decades, there is a Zimbabwean government prepared to recognise our plight, to treat us with respect and dignity and to compensate us for our suffering. We have put this matter behind us, and call on others to do the same."
- He continued, "We hope that the dialogue and willingness to compromise reflected in this agreement represents the beginning of a new era in relations between Zimbabweans of different races and backgrounds, and between Zimbabwe and the nations of the world."
- Pascoe added, "While the agreement is not perfect, as those who have lived this struggle for two decades, we resolved to move forward, and to not let the perfect be the enemy of the good."

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